

knew that Paul's coming meant the end of another pleasant interlude. And pleasant interludes were rare in the misunderstood lady's life.

Bertram left first, as Paul intended he should, and when the poet's back disappeared through the Gothic archway leading from the cloistered room to the hall, Paul did not resume his seat, but stood in front of his sister, looking down at her with a faint expression of amusement in his eyes, which were also gray.

"Poor Nelly," he said, in a tone of commiseration which always grated on Elinore's sensibilities. "Poor hungry poet! Do you know, they told me he was making love to you, and for a moment I believed them."

"And suppose he was?"

Elinore had plenty of courage, and she was going to make a fight for her poor sad pleasures.

"Had that been true it would have been my duty to inform Sandy. As it is—My dear Nelly, why don't you have the poor fellow to dinner and give him a real meal?"

He exploded his bomb with his usual adroitness and a wave of angry color flooded his sister's cheeks.

"You are disgusting!" she said coldly.

"And you are cruel. Even poets have stomachs, Nelly."

"You dare to say he comes here to get something to eat?"

"Put him to the test. Omit tea and watch its effect."

Elinore brooded over Paul's advice. It couldn't be true, and yet she, too, had noticed the poet's consumption of sweet cakes. She had thought it an idiosyncrasy, a harmless, almost childish trait, a survival of the boy in the man, but if it were true that he came because of her bountifully supplied tea table, and not because his soul was drawn to hers—oh, it would be too humiliating!

The poet's profile and his appetite haunted her all evening and prevented her from sleeping as well as usual, but in the morning she had come to a decision. She would act on Paul's suggestion and put Bertram to the test.

She ordered the butler to omit tea.

Bertram came as usual, but his man-

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DINNER TABLE CONVERSATION

(Continued from Page 9.)

but numerous ex-school teachers. We must be gentle with our school principal."

The S. P.: "Well, I don't wonder. What with the P. T. A. and the mother's circles, and the women's clubs and the board of education and the infantile uplifters, and the Red Cross and the soldier's kits, and the school orchestras and the home gardening and the sex hygienists, and the summer schools, we have enough to drive us mad. One of my teachers got into an awful mixup with a mother's circle a few days ago because she corrected the president's grammar when she said: 'Us mothers is going to attend to this here matter.'"

The S. E.: "Oh, if it comes to grammar, you ought to be in society. A

haughty dame who was trying to impress me with the importance of giving a column and a picture to her daughter's wedding assured me that 'Me and my daughters was leaders of society in Denver, we was'—and I had a painful session with the lady."

The S. W.: "You arrant little snob. Why, my dear, my bishop fished the cherry out of his orangeade with his finger and spilled soup all down his coat. They tell me Billy Sunday has excellent table manners—he needs 'em. I am going to weep bitter tears if they don't give me the Billy Sunday assignment."

The P. A.: "Well, you won't get it, my dear. You are too catty. And Billy has been taken up by the churches. The newspapers will have to treat him decorously. You won't be allowed to kill Billy with ridicule, even if you could."

The D. C.: "Personally I feel that Billy should come under my department. He is the most dramatic thing that has come to town for years."

The S. E.: "What do you think about this society circus for the Children's Hospital in Berkeley Square. I got a scoop on that. All the very best people—"

The S. W.: "You bet. Sure. All the very best people—the elephants, the skating bears, the boxing kangaroo, Poto, the clown, the movie stars, the cow girls, a professional mannikin Fashion Show and—"

The S. E.: "Well, it took society to organize it, to think of it, to exploit it, anyway. I intend making it my Sunday lead—"

The P. A.: "Well, do get a par in about Jane Vernoudy for me, there's a dear, and mention that she is starring at present with the—"

The S. E.: "I'll be sugared if I do. Try the dramatic critic, angel child. By the way, Phila Miller and Don O'Melveny had a lovely—"

The S. W.: "No, you don't darling. There is nothing in all the world so dull as a society editress' account of a society wedding. They never mention the only really interesting happenings, the snippy relatives, the best man's faux pas, the bride's maids' garters and the champagne punch that went wrong."

The S. P.: "Oh, that reminds me, one of my children told me—"

The D. C.: "Do remember that you are a respectable spinister, darling."

The S. P.: "If you interrupt again, you'll miss a piquant society scandal, because this child is the son of a prominent couple who are on the verge of divorce. And he came to school crying the other morning because mamma had thrown the coffee pot at—"

The S. W.: "Bill, please waiter. Heavens! It's nearly 8 p. m. and I haven't written the story about the bishop yet. I positively refuse to listen to divorce scandals after lunching with a bishop."

The S. E.: "Come up to my office with me, dear. I might get a scoop on it for Sunday. And if the Special Writer has been lunching with a bishop, she jolly well ought to pay for the dinners."

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